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Gosens, T.C.A.P.

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Tom Gosens

The Value of Recreational Areas in Urban Regions

The number of hours and the percentage of income spent on recreation have increased significantly in the last 100 years. Moreover, 38% of all travel movement is with a recreational purpose, and as such it is important to understand what the Dutch consumer prefers, so that future decisions are in line with what is requested. It is also important to understand how the Dutch consumer (and which particular type of consumer) responds to supply changes. These topics are dealt with in this dissertation, using discrete choice modelling techniques.

This dissertation reveals that the consumer responds to factors such as the size and diversity of non-urban land when it comes to nature-based recreation trips, while the monumental outlook of a municipality is an important factor in the choice of destination for inner-city recreation activities. Surprisingly, better access to nature-based recreation sites doesn't increase the number of nature-based recreation trips that consumers undertake. In addition, there is not enough evidence to conclude that better access would increase the total participation in recreation. On the other hand, there is also evidence that the time allocated to (nature-based) recreation would increase if the right conditions are met. Especially the provision of new urban parks might be part of the solution, as the amount of travel needed for urban park recreation is limited and the urban consumer, who experiences the biggest constraints with respect to nature-based recreation, appreciates this particular recreation environment.

Tom Gosens (1984) studied Economics at the Radboud University in Nijmegen. He specialized in international economics and graduated in the year 2008. In 2009 he started his dissertation research at the Department of Spatial Economics of the VU University. For his dissertation research he evaluated the value of recreational areas in metropolitan regions, the Randstad region in particular.

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